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Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 HA-05 /064 W
----------106290 230931Z /21
P R 230813Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8872
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SOPN KS US
SUBJ: KOREAN PRESS ON PRESIDENT'S STATE OF UNION MESSAGE AND
HOLBROOKE'S JAN 19 SPEECH

1. PROMINENT PRESS COVERAGE AND COMMENTARY (WHICH LINKED PRESIDENT/HOLBROOKE SPEECHES) DEALT WITH PRESIDENT'S FOREIGN POLICY TOPICS, STRESSING HUMAN RIGHTS AND COMMITMENT TO ROK SECURITY. OVERALL REACTION TO SPEECHES AS A WHOLE WAS CAUTIOUSLY FAVORABLE, BUT STILL SKEPTICAL ON SECURITY ASPECTS OF US/ROK RELATIONS.

2. TONGA ILBO SAW "NOTHING PARTICULARLY NEW IN FOREIGN POLICY" IN THE STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGE. NOTED THAT "HUMAN RIGHTS DIPLOMACY NOW FORMS THE BACKBONE OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY," PRESIDENT'S REAFFIRMATION OF TROOP WITHDRAWAL PLANS SEEN AS A "TEST CASE" OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY BECAUSE OF MAJOR OPPOSITION TO PLANS HAVING SURFACED IN U.S. JOONGANG ILBO THOUGHT PRESIDENT "BROKE LITTLE NEW GROUND" IN HIS COMMENTS ON TROOP WITHDRAWAL AND COMPENSA-
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TORY MEASURES, AND TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT THAT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD TROOP WITHDRAWAL PROCEED BEFORE COMPENSATORY MEASURES ARE REALIZED.

3. ALL PRESS PICKED OUT HUMAN RIGHTS AS MAJOR POINT IN PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE. "PRESIDENT HAS SUCCEEDED IN THE REALIZATION OF HIS POLICY ON HUMAN RIGHTS WITH FIRM

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CONVICTION DESPITE CRITICISM BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD."
MOST PRESS NOTED HOLBROOKE'S STATEMENT THAT "SOME PROGRESS
ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM" HAD BEEN MADE WITH ROK.
JOONGANG ILBO COMMENTED "HIS ADMINISTRATION'S EMPHASIS
ON HUMAN RIGHTS HAS LED TO A SIGNIFICANT MOVEMENT TOWARD
GREATER FREEDOM AND HUMANITY." REACTION WAS FAVORABLE
AND PRESS SEES HUMAN RIGHTS AS CONTINUING IMPORTANT ITEM
IN US/ROK RELATIONS.

4. KYUNGHYANG SINMUN WAS THE MOST CRITICAL OF THE PRESIDENT'S
MESSAGE AMONG ROK PRESS. CONTINUED ITS LINE THAT US POLICY
APPEARS TO BE EUROPE-FIRST, NOTING PRESIDENT "DID NOT SAY
MUCH IN REFERENCE TO THE SECURITY OF ALLIES IN ASIA" AND
"HIS EUROPE-FIRST DIPLOMATIC POLICY IS VIEWED AS A SIGNAL
FOR US RETREAT FROM ASIA POLITICALLY AND MILITARILY."
EDITORIALIZED THAT "IN AN OVERALL VIEW, WE GET THE FEELING
THAT THE MESSAGE INDICATES THAT PRESIDENT CARTER IS TAKING
THINGS TOO EASILY IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND THAT THEREFORE
THE COUNTERMEASURES ARE EXCESSIVELY BASED ON IDEALISM."

5. SELECTED PAPERS EXPRESSED DISPLEASURE WITH PRESIDENT'S
REMARKS ON KOREAN SECURITY SITUATION. HANGUK ILBO REMARKED
"IT IS TOO OPTIMISTIC...WE STRONGLY REJECT SUCH OPTIMISM
OF CARTER ADMINISTRATION BECAUSE WE ARE STILL FACING
THREAT OF NK INVASION." CHOSUN ILBO COMPARED PHASEOUT
OF TROOPS FROM KOREA (SUPPOSEDLY ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST
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DANGEROUS SPOTS) WITH REINFORCEMENT OF NATO TROOPS, AND
CONCLUDED PRESIDENT FAILED TO GIVE AN HONEST ANSWER TO
QUESTION OF WHY WITHDRAW TROOPS NOW?

6. COVERAGE OF HOLBROOKE'S SPEECH WAS, WITH ONE EXCEPTION,
POSITIVE. THREE PENDING US/ROK ISSUES WERE EMPHASIZED:
1) TROOP WITHDRAWAL 2) PTS CASE 3) HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM.
PRESS WAS PARTICULARLY PLEASED TO SEE HOLBROOKE AGREE THAT
COMPENSATORY MEASURES SHOULD NOT BE LINKED WITH PTS
CASE. TONGA ILBO'S CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM BEST REPRESENTS
ROK PRESS IN GENERAL--"AS LONG AS AMERICA RECOGNIZES
THE FACT THAT THE KOREAN PENINSULA IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S
MOST POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS SPOTS AS HOLBROOKE POINT OUT,
THE PROSPECTS FOR OUR SECURITY DIPLOMACY TOWARD THE UNITED
STATES WILL NOT BE DARK." SEOUL SINMUN'S WASH CORRESPONDENT,
AN YONG-MO, CONTRIBUTED COMMENT TO JAN 23 EDITION CLAIMING
HOLBROOKE MADE TWO "INTENTIONAL MISTAKES". FIRST,
HOLBROOKE SAYING ROK AND US CONCLUDED AGREEMENT WHICH ALLOWS US
TO SECURE PTS AS A WITNESS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE
US. COMMENT WAS THAT IF ANYONE (COURT OR CONGRESS)
DEMANDS PTS TESTIMONY, ACCORDING TO THIS REASONING HE
MUST TESTIFY, AND HOLBROOKE KNOWS THAT WAS

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NOT CONTAINED IN AGREEMENT. SECOND, CLAIMS THAT HOLBROOKE STATED "IN REALITY, PAK CASE AND US MILITARY AID HAVE BECOME MUTUALLY RELATED." COMMENT FOLLOWS THAT BOTH PRESIDENT AND SECDEF HAVE SAID PTS CASE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH US MILITARY AID TO ROK.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGE, NEWS MEDIA COMMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SEOUL00577
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780033-0739
Format: TEL
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780133/aaaabbwf.tel
Line Count: 122
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
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Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3730368
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KOREAN PRESS ON PRESIDENT\'S STATE OF UNION MESSAGE AND HOLBROOKE\'S JAN 19 SPEECH
TAGS: SOPN, KS, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0efb24e1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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